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BOOK REVIEWS

The Scotch-Irish in America. By Henry Jones Ford. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1915. Pp. 607.

From the pen of a university instructor one expects a serious and scholarly book. This volume by Dr. Ford is a valuable contribution to American history. It briefly suggests the extent of Irish Presbyterian influence in shaping the institutions of the United States, in establishing their independence, and subsequently, both in peace and war, in promoting their welfare. In examining his monograph, Professor Ford will pardon us for commencing with a consideration of the last chapter instead of the first. This method may possess advantages, or it may signify nothing more than the eccentricity of the reviewer. At any rate, it will relieve of their obscurity some facts which should be made clear. In this inquiry it will appear: that Ulster is not the native land of Irish genius; that its material supremacy is undoubted; that the reasons therefor are too clear to be subjects for discussion; that in Ireland, Ulster's leaders have been the chief ornament and support of tyranny; that, not content with seizing the lands of the natives, the invaders have robbed the vanquished of their good name. When the victim is made contemptible, injustice resembles a virtue. At any rate, the injured are only the wicked and the weak.

In America the Irish Presbyterian element is seen to better advantage. The achievements of the men of that stock have been exceedingly numerous and exceedingly noteworthy. They have been more gifted, more genial, and more tolerant than their Ulster kinsmen. It is this more sunny part of the Scotch-Irish world that Professor Ford has described. With this statement of opinions, the remarks of the reviewer will be more intelligible.

"From time to time," says Dr. Ford, "objections have been raised to the term 'Scotch-Irish.'" In his *Dutch and Quaker Colonies*, John Fiske says:

The name Scotch-Irish is an awkward compound, and is in many quarters condemned. Curiously enough, there is no one who seems to object to it so strongly as the Irish Catholic. While his feelings toward the "Far-Downer" are certainly not affectionate, he is, nevertheless, anxious to claim him with his deeds and trophies, as simply Irish, and grudges to Scotland the claim to any share in producing him. It must be admitted, however, that there is a point of view from which the Scotch-Irish may be regarded as more Scotch than Irish. The difficulty might be compromised by calling them Ulstermen, or Ulster Presbyterians.

The last name, Ulster Presbyterians, is liable to as few objections as any. It may be that Dr. Ford had good reasons for not adopting it. Perhaps, too, he has examined Pellew's *Castle and Cabin* and for some reason feared to quote from it. Yet in parts it is closely connected with this book. As literature, it is true, Pellew's work is poor stuff, but he speaks from an abundance of feeling untrammelled by the restraints of rhetoric or of truth. With apologies to connoisseurs in form, we give the following excerpt from his *Castle and Cabin*: "Here in Ulster we have nine counties as prosperous as any in the land. We are an energetic, honest race, very different from the south of Ireland people. The successful Irishmen in America are chiefly of Irish-Scotch descent. The southern Irish are born politicians and form a clique in every city. The farmers, too, on the hills and mountains, are very ignorant and brutal. . . ." Though no anthropologist has ever reported the discovery at Portadown of any vestige of former Indian occupation, this is an exquisite imitation of a war-whoop. Mr. Pellew, who would warn his readers against Home Rule, boasts of Ulster's prowess and prosperity, and in the very accents of the Pharisee cries aloud: "O God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men. . . ." Of course, his province *is* in a flourishing state. Was it not for generations favored by special laws? And is it not still enjoying the benefits of ancestral plunder?

Mr. Pellew informs us that Ulstermen are "an energetic, honest race, very different from the south of Ireland people." Passing without observation the cowardly implications in this assertion, it is admitted by economists and historians that the right to retain a just share of the wealth produced, always begets both abundance and industry. In other lands the Celtic Irish work no less diligently than their neighbors, but in those favored

countries there are no landlords to exploit labor. Thanks to English and not to Ulster leaders, the greedy race will soon be gone.

"The successful Irishmen in America," adds Pellew, "are chiefly of Irish-Scotch descent." The reader is to infer a connection between character and high exploit, and to understand that the success of the "Irish-Scotch" is due to the superior merits of their faith. If one consider the fact that the power of Protestant America, social, religious, and political, is certain to support the Presbyterian immigrant from Ulster, one would be surprised to find any of his ventures ending in failure. Do the agricultural industrial, commercial, and political interests of America likewise rally to the support of the Irish? The farmer, the entrepreneur, the merchant, and the statesman can make answer. In our time when one applies for a position, subaltern or even menial, one often meets the inquiry, "What is your religion?" Is this a request for information on which there is later to be made a statistical report, or is it merely an item in the category of efficiency? Though the fact is not generally known, and I relate it in confidence, it is actually a barrier against Shintoists, having been designed as a measure of precaution against the entrance into our service of those abandoned people who worship their ancestors. The inquiry looks not to Dublin but to Yeddo.

Without an oppressive feeling of inferiority, we Celts could concede the accuracy of the statement that "the successful Irishmen in America are chiefly of Irish-Scotch descent." But its arrogance and craft encourage a denial. These are not the emblems of sincerity. If by success is meant material prosperity or good fortune, we yield the point, for, as already explained, there are in our country mighty forces that support the Presbyterian Irish. Several of that stock have attained to even the Presidency. While our written Constitution does not exclude from this office citizens of Irish Catholic ancestry, the unwritten constitution does. It also effectively operates to prevent their easy entrance into cabinets. Yet little men of other creeds, or of no creed, are deemed fit to preside in any department.

Leaving for a moment the distribution of high Federal honors, how are favors bestowed in the ample field of education? To be of Irish Catholic descent is generally a guarantee that one's

application for even a minor teaching position will fail. So well known is this fact that few of the race qualify for duties which they may never be privileged to perform. In brief, in the matter of worldly prosperity or good fortune, Irish-Americans are not conspicuous. If by success is meant noteworthy achievement, the record is much more favorable. In Ireland the men of genius have been, almost without exception, Anglo-Irish or Celtic-Irish. Of the statesmen sent to colonial America, two of the ablest. Col. Thomas Dongan and Sir William Johnson, were Irish. In worth and foresight the former had no superior. In the war for independence, Celtic-Irish and Anglo-Irish officers rendered services of value. On land there were such men as Gen. John Sullivan, Gen. George Clinton, and Gen. James Clinton, while on sea there were the O'Briens of Machias, and Captain, afterward Commodore, John Barry. In Congress there were statesmen like Carroll of Carrollton, Aedanus Burke, and his Galway kinsman, Thomas Burke. In the Constitutional Convention of 1787 there were Celtic and Anglo-Celtic Irish. We may mention Thomas FitzSimons, the grandfather of General Meade, also Daniel Carroll, and Pierce Butler.

The years of peace and reconstruction found in America economists of the prominence of Mathew Carey and his more distinguished son, Henry Charles Carey, Matthew Lyon, soldier and statesman, William Duane, Dewitt Clinton and William J. Duane.

In the second war with England, American naval prowess was illustrated by Capt. Thomas MacDonough, whose victory at Plattsburg had important consequences. During the weak, piping time of peace the services of the Irish were in no great request. In 1844 and 1855 the Know Nothings assailed the integrity of Irish Catholics, but these ulcers of the body politic were burned away in the flames of civil war. When the battle flags were furled, they reappeared.

In the Union ranks there were enough Irish to make, by the standard of that day, several large armies. It will be necessary to name but a few of the more distinguished commanders, such as Kearney, Mulligan, Meagher, Shields, and Sheridan. These will favorably compare with Birney, McDowell, the McCooks, and McClellan.

When the storm of war was hushed, the members of the American Protective Association shouldered arms, and drove the Celt to the walks of private life. In 1898, during the short war with Spain, John Patrick Holland offered to serve our Government with his submarine, but his assistance was declined. Shade of Royal Oak!

“And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm’d a surly hymn.”

Viscount Bryce, too, held the opinion that the Irish formed cliques in American cities and were responsible for much municipal corruption. Legislative inquiries, however, disclosed facts more complimentary; then the diplomat stole from his repast. Late at the banquet hall, Pellew enjoys a jackal’s feast.

As managed by the author of *Castle and Cabin*, Pegasus curvets frightfully. From American cities, defiled by Celts, the rider, in one mighty leap, alights either in Connemara or Knockmeildown. Bellerophon himself held not so firm a seat. “The farmers, too, on the hills and mountains, are very ignorant and brutal. . . .” This is not, as the juxtaposition would lead one to suppose, a reference to American farmers. In fact, it is not a description of the class of farmers anywhere, but a spectre raised to frighten those Presbyterians who, from either generosity or indolence, might trust their interests to the fairness of a Dublin parliament. Not for generations have these goblins alarmed any Protestants outside of Ulster. Indeed the deities of the Irish household are chiefly Protestant, yet to them the Irish Catholic is constant in his devotion. A little exertion would enable one to prepare on the subject of Irish limitations a diversified anthology of malevolent libel. If this dreary tract had been explored by John Fiske, he would not have been surprised at the lack of Irish Catholic affection for Ulster Presbyterians.

The evident reply to another observation of Fiske is, that the Irish are not singular in claiming for their native land the achievements of all her sons. In the opinion of the reviewer this is a human, not an Irish characteristic. American authors who record the deeds of their countrymen, do not confine themselves to Mormon, to Christian Science or to Lutheran worthies.

In classifying the Irish and the “Scotch-Irish” as two distinct race stocks, Senator Lodge has some authority to support him,

but the question is far more intricate than that. He is still less accurate in the statement that during the colonial period "people of pure Irish stock came scarcely at all." This theme is not to be examined in a paragraph, but it may be noticed hereafter.

In the eventful years that have passed since 1609, when the Scots began to settle in Ulster, there have been in Ireland in considerable number, orators and statesmen, poets and historians, critics and scientists. From Richard Stanyhurst down to Bernard Shaw, there has been a long and brilliant line of authors. With one or two exceptions they have been either Celtic-Irish or Anglo-Irish. Fiske to the contrary, Irishmen are not accustomed to boast of the achievements of the Ulster Scot. The Irish feeling for Scotland, however, is very different. Caledonia has been the fruitful mother of philosophers, orators, scientists, historians, economists, poets, and heroes. In a word, it has been the home of the lettered and the brave. Why, then, the dearth of noble natures in Scottish Ulster? The invaders were not dragged down by the natives, for they knew the "wild Irish" but to despoil them, to fight them, to mock them. Tyrannous hate destroyed the finer feelings of the Scottish settler and chilled the current of his soul. His fancy spent its force in schemes of lawless gain. Therefore it is that sterility has been the inheritance of the son for the guilt of the sire.

Though the "Scotch-Irish" have had slight contact with genius, they have yet by their ability as men of business, given to the older Irish, impoverished by tribal, by Danish, and by Anglo-Norman warfare, a shining example of efficient methods of business. In commerce and in manufacturing the "Scotch-Irish" of Ulster have gone far ahead of the rest of their countrymen. But the fact should not be overlooked that they have long been assisted by a friendly Parliament. If the other provinces had been similarly aided, or if they had merely been neglected, the industrial and commercial supremacy of Ulster would be greatly diminished. For man's weal or woe on earth, the most potent force in shaping his material life is government. Under nearly every form the races have advanced in civilization, but not under every kind of government.

To Americans in general the term "Scotch-Irish" has a favorable connotation, while the unqualified word "Irish" has a

connotation decidedly uncomplimentary. A citizen of Irish ancestry who does a deed of note is expected to be "Scotch-Irish" and often is so described. If, on the other hand, his feat did not become a god, he is reported to be simply "Irish." Knowing that at home his Presbyterian friend from Ulster has no more superiority than that conferred by statute and by profession of the dominant creed, the mere Irishman denies that his more favored countrymen possess uncommon merits, and resents their claim to superiority. It is not that he is offended by his neighbor's attachment to silver, by his reverence for the memory of John Knox, or because of differences of race, whether these be considerable or inconsiderable. In Ireland the Ulster Scot has always been the champion of the oppressor.

The reader of Professor Ford's book receives the impression that the Scottish occupation of Ulster was a process as gentle as the fall of summer rain. The fact is that it was filled with tragedy. The author believes that the making of better arrangements was then not easy to see. Bacon is quoted to show that *he* did not know a wiser way. But the brightest and meanest of mankind had opinions to suit his sordid day, and others to gain him credit with posterity. Probably he had this consideration in mind when, in his essay, *Of Plantations*, he wrote: "I like a plantation in a pure soil; that is, where the people are not dislanted to the end to plant in others. For else it is rather an extirpation than a plantation." Before the year 1603 the conquest had extended to all Ireland. The success of Elizabeth's forces had been accomplished by murder, massacre, and deliberately created famine. These, with instances of rare treachery, made up the woof of victory. But yet to come was the grand minister of misfortune.

The Reformation had been rejected by the Irish universally, and by the people of English descent generally. As between the English and the Irish this effaced the distinctions of race. The two elements were afterward fused by oppression. The recent arrivals in Ulster, however, were Protestants, and were supported by the government of England. Thus was introduced into Ireland an element of discord that has defeated every attempt at unity. The reign of James I, under the pretext of Protestantism,

was marked by the commission of grave crimes against Ireland. There was not, indeed, complete extirpation, for a miserable remnant of the natives fled to mountain fastnesses, or sought a refuge in almost inaccessible bogs.

Under Charles I iniquitous laws replaced the sword. The soldier was superseded by the judge. Booty and plunder became known as forfeiture and confiscation. By the new tribunals, which inquired into defective titles, jurors refusing to give a verdict for the King were ruined by excessive fines or cast into loathsome prisons. Charles received in three provinces, as the spoils of the people, 1,000,000 arable acres.

Chichester, Davies, Spenser, and Bacon, the witnesses examined by Dr. Ford, are as credible as any. But they had not made the cycle of Irish history. In the Ulster of our day there are many men who would make similar reports. Yet the testimony furnishes an imperfect story. There are important aspects of the occupation that are untouched. Under Professor Ford's plan, the emphasis is, of course, placed on the experience of the Scotch-Irish in America. Of their sojourn in Ireland he has given a somewhat rapid and fairly reliable sketch, but he has seldom taken the point of view of the natives. Yet this is not unimportant.

The harsh treatment which forced tens of thousands of Ulster Presbyterians to migrate to America is admirably described by the author. His account of their early settlements is interesting and accurate. The story related by him makes clear their anti-English feeling at the time of the Revolution, when the great majority, thinking on the treatment of their ancestors, favored independence. For the war the Ulster Irish furnished many of the most resolute soldiers. To the subsequent development of the United States, men of this stock have made contributions significant and scarcely surpassed. Whether one regard education, law, commerce, agriculture, social organization or statesmanship, the record is the same.

Appendix A, from the account of Fynes Moryson, presents the Irish of the year 1600 as a rude and barbarous people, not much, if at all superior to the Indians that, a little later, the English met at Jamestown. But Moryson describes incidents

far more revolting than the filth, the coarseness, and the ignorance of the Irish. Why has the author failed to give an excerpt setting forth the superior refinement of the English? Is not Moryson a source of our information concerning the destruction of crops, year after year, and literally the depopulation of Munster? He declares that "No spectacle was more frequent in the ditches of the towns, and especially in wasted countries, than to see multitudes of these poor people, the Irish, dead, with their mouths all colored green by eating nettles, docks, and all things they could rend above ground." Multitudes of dead with no one to bury them! From military tactics to table manners, the English had learned many things from the Italians of the Renaissance, but in all their intercourse with that enlightened people they seem to have acquired little humanity.

Dr. Ford's object in adding to his book the quotations from Moryson is not at all apparent. Even if, in point of accuracy, the account be photographic, it but the more strongly shows the incapacity of English statesmen and the inhumanity of English soldiers, for when his author trod the dolorous vales of Munster, much of Ireland had for more than four hundred years been cursed by alien rule. Wretchedness, despair, and death, a grisly troop, followed the victors into Eden. A score of years before Moryson described that forlorn people, Edmund Spenser, from Kilcolman Castle, had been struck by the beauty and the resources of meadow, lake, and stream. In immortal verse he who taught the Mulla's waves to weep, has sung of nature's bounty, "the great heaps of salmon," in the deep bosom of the Barrow.

Are the quoted parts of Moryson's description included in order to justify the harshness of the invader? We have no means of knowing. The conquest progressed until every Celt had passed under the yoke. Thenceforth, through the sinister centuries, the subjugated race toiled on to pamper the lords of wine and oil.

It is much to be regretted that Professor Ford has not examined and reported on the printed proceedings of the Scotch-Irish conventions. His estimate of the spirit of those writings would be interesting and would have improved what we consider the ablest work on this useful element in our state.